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interpreting the past and understanding the present and preparing the future.

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RALPH WALDO EMERSON. OLIVER W. FIRKINS. The Houghton Mifflin Co.  
1915. Pp. 379. \$1.75.

The external facts of the life of Emerson have long been before the public, and the generation following his own has had time to sum up and assimilate his thought. Already he has seemed to be of those figures of the past to whom we may return to be reminded of the forces that stimulated our early growth, but from whom we no longer expect surprises. Only the access to fresh materials would seem to justify a new general treatment of his life and work; and such an access has been afforded by the publication of his Journals. These extensive diaries, kept by Emerson during the greater part of his life, have now been edited, and fill ten volumes. They might have been completed merely by a critical account of what they do to correct or supplement our previous knowledge of the man and his work. Professor Firkins has preferred to re-tell the whole story and re-estimate the whole body of Emerson's writings as these now lie entire before us. The result more than justifies his decision.

The treatment is nothing if not systematic. Half the volume is biographical, and one could not ask for a more satisfactory presentation of the personality and environment of its subject. Professor Firkins is sufficiently detached from the atmosphere and tradition of New England to be able to deal with them in truer perspective than most writers on the Concord philosophers have been able to achieve. His attitude towards the man Emerson is sympathetic and admiring without being adulatory; and a lively sense of humor adds vivacity to his characterization of the minor worthies. The selection of biographical material is adequate for all the purposes of the student interested primarily in Emerson's thought, and the handling of it is admirable.

The second part of the book consists of chapters on "The Harvest," "Emerson as Prose Writer," "Emerson as Poet," and "Emerson's Philosophy," and closes with "Foreshadowings." In the first of these the author undertakes to characterize one by one all the separate essays and lectures that constitute the Emersonian canon. This laborious task is accomplished with skill and versatility; but before the reader finishes the chapter his wonder at the author's conscientious daring in assuming such a burden almost gets the better of his

admiration for the wit and resource which make it readable. The discussion of "Emerson as Prose Writer" is subdivided into eighteen sections, and some of these into minor heads — a method that will offend some by its obviousness or its suggestion of the much abused doctorate dissertation, but which makes it certain that we always know where we are. The same kind of analysis is employed in the treatment of the poetry and the philosophy, only it must be confessed that the headings in the latter are at times even more enigmatic than Emerson's own titles.

Professor Firkins is convinced that far too much has been made of Emerson's lack of coherence and logical sequence, and it may be that his schematic machinery will help to correct the prevalent error. But in the endless subdivisions of the present work there is perceptible also something of an Emersonian staccato, and the gain in clearness and concentration is slightly discounted by a lack of continuity. The biographer reminds one of his subject in other respects. He has much of Emerson's power of concrete illustration; he employs imagery with a freedom and vividness that would make us suspect, if we did not know, that he is himself a poet; and he not infrequently achieves an epigram that rivals his choicest quotations. A few sentences will illustrate:

"There is no evidence that this transitoriness of the virtues was to Emerson much more than an exciting possibility, fine hazard or stirring peril, adding the charm of romantic vicissitude to the unguessed destinies of mankind. For 'Circles,' with all its intrepidity, is not a revolutionary manifesto, nor even a 'Marseillaise'; it is an attempt to gauge the depth of the universe by the rapidity with which it engulfs institutions and beliefs. Emerson was content with his view of the depths; his generalizations are devastating, but his illustrations are relatively mild. The truth is that the sense that change is continuous quiets the eagerness for those particular changes whose value rests largely on our trust in their finality. Radicalism is half destroyed by the universalizing of its own principle."

The final chapter is in many respects the most interesting and original. Here at last the author's high estimate of Emerson's permanent importance is expressed whole-heartedly. The philosopher at present, he admits, has less than his due influence. "The world adopts Emerson's sagacities, chants his verses, savors his pungencies, and reveres his character. Meanwhile it ignores his philosophy; he is at the same time honored and forsaken." But he believes this will not always be so. In a succession of brilliant paragraphs he points out the elements of Emerson's thought which humanity is only preparing to receive, and concludes with the con-

viction that Emerson "is a revelation of capacity, an adjourned hope, an unassured but momentous foreshadowing." In "Foreshadowings," as in numbers of passages throughout the book, Professor Firkins is not merely giving an adequate and concentrated account of the first of American thinkers, he is himself making an important contribution to thought.

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FRANKLIN SPENCER SPALDING. *MAN AND BISHOP.* JOHN HOWARD MELISH.  
The Macmillan Co. 1917. Pp. 297. \$2.25.

Frank Spalding, as his friends called him, was born in 1865, and died (struck by an automobile) in 1914. He was Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Utah for ten years. Rev. Mr. Melish, who tells the story of his short life, is rector of the parish of the Holy Trinity, Brooklyn, and a leader among those who are thinking and working not only for social betterment but for social justice.

Spalding was a socialist. He set no mitigating adjective before the name, and knew no differences between his position and that of other men who think that way. He had the grace of unfailing and unflinching frankness, and declared his social gospel in all places. He preached it in Trinity Church, New York, in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, before the General Convention, and in Westminster Abbey, when Mr. Asquith pronounced his sermon one of the most inspiring to which he had ever listened. "It was the passion of his life," says his biographer. "He was an enthusiastic convert to the economic theories of Karl Marx, and he saw in socialism the instrument by which, under God, the terrible wrongs and inequalities which wreck the civilization of today were to be righted. He belonged to those religious pioneers of our day who see the larger interpretation of which Christianity is capable, and which it must receive if it is to become again the dominant factor in civilization."

Here his biographer speaks not only for his hero but for himself, and is thereby enabled to enter into the situation with sympathetic understanding. It is interesting to read in the book how this straightforward and uncompromising socialism was preached for ten years by a bishop of the Episcopal Church, not only without serious criticism but with increasing admiration and affection for the preacher. It is a tribute not so much to the force of his reasoning as to the fineness of his manly character.

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